



Washington State House of Representatives Workgroup on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment

Education and Training Recommendations

The Workgroup recommends the following training and education requirements and infrastructure. This recommendation helps to foster a cultural change in the Legislature and ensures that all members of the legislative community understand that the House will take action when harassment occurs.

Mandatory Training

We recommend a mandatory training covering the Code of Conduct, Respectful Workplace Policy, definitions, reporting process, and consequences for violations.

- For newly hired staff and appointed members, attendance at this training must happen within the first 30 days of starting a position in the Legislature. Completion of this training in the specified period should be a condition of employment for staff. For newly elected members, this training shall be attended by the end of January during their first legislative session. For members and lobbyists, record of attendance or non-attendance of this training should be publicly discloseable. For lobbyists, we recommend that this training requirement be one of the requirements to submit an L-1 form.
- This training should require in-person attendance as a condition of completion and must be attended biennially after the initial training. It should be offered by the end of January of odd year sessions, and should include a mix of staff, members, and lobbyists to ensure shared understanding of the culture and expectations of participating in the legislative work environment amongst work groups. At least one training option should be provided for the attendance of staff only.
- The training should be interactive and include scenarios unique to the legislative environment.
- This training should address power differentials in the legislative environment.
- This training should include clear definitions of who are supervisors, who are mandatory reporters, and what are the expectations for those roles as outlined in the Respectful Workplace Policy.
- This training should be updated on a biennial basis.
- This training will be planned and facilitated by an individual housed in the Independent Resource (IR) Office; this person will not receive formal complaints as part of their role.
- Consequences for non-attendance should include the following:
 - For members, lack of access to staff (including their Legislative Assistant), interns, or pages;
 - For staff, this training shall be a condition of ongoing employment; and
 - For lobbyists, non-attendance of the training should impact their ability to remain in good standing with the Public Disclosure Commission.

Elective Training

We recommend an additional requirement of five hours of 'elective' training required annually.

- Staff, members, and lobbyists should be able to choose from a multitude of offerings that either meet or exceed the five-hour requirement.
- There should be online offerings to accommodate all members of the legislative community.
- Lobbyists and members should be able to submit a substitution waiver to the IR Office that will allow them to count outside trainings towards the five-hour requirement.

- For staff and members, all offered trainings should qualify for house travel reimbursement, even if the five-hour requirement has already been met. An approved travel authorization would still be required in order to receive reimbursement.
- These trainings should supplement the mandatory training and may include, but should not be limited to, the following topics: peer-to-peer counseling and support; strategies for resolving interpersonal conflict; bystander training; assertiveness training; power differentials between various roles in the legislative work environment; and training on how to receive feedback on inappropriate work behavior.
- Training may be offered from both internal and external parties. Outside trainers and offerings should tailor their curriculum to the unique legislative environment. A vetting process should be conducted on outside contractors to ensure their training is relevant to the legislative body.
- Whenever possible, the IR Office is encouraged to seek approval from the Washington State Bar Association for Continuing Legal Education credit.

Mandatory Supervisor Training

We recommend an additional training requirement for members, staff directors/chiefs of staff, caucus policy and communications staff directors, Office of Program Research committee coordinators, and caucus administrative staff because of their roles assisting staff and helping staff navigate institutional processes.

- This training should include more information about the reporting process, expectations for how situations are handled, and how to support staff who bring concerns to their attention.
- All staff should be aware of the type and content of this training.

Oversight

We recommend that all trainings offered by the House be considered/approved by a Training Advisory Committee.

- This Committee should be composed of elected representatives from each of the following, except where named by role:
 - Chief Clerk or designee;
 - Two members of the House of Representatives, one from each of the two largest caucuses;
 - Two Legislative Assistants, one from each of the two largest caucuses;
 - Two Caucus Staff, one from each of the two largest caucuses;
 - Two members representing staff of the Office of Program Research;
 - One member representing House administration; and
 - One non-voting member representing lobbyists.
- Duties of the Committee should include: development and biennial review for content, accuracy, accessibility, and applicability of mandatory training curriculum; development of elective training options that are responsive to the IR Office's reports to the IR Board on trends and systemic issues; evaluation of mandatory and elective trainings offered; potential revision of the level of elective hours required; vetting/informing trainers of the uniqueness of the legislative environment before trainings are offered; and regularly collecting training recommendations and feedback from staff.
- The Committee should utilize existing training resources when available (including, but not limited to, trainings offered by the Department of Enterprise Services or other state agencies/programs).